

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## VERONICA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."

IN FIVE BOOKS.

### BOOK II.

#### CHAPTER III. IN MR. FROST'S SANCTUM.

MESSRS. FROST AND LOVEGROVE, solicitors, had their offices in a large old house in Bedford-square. The whole of the ground-floor was used for offices. In the upper part of the house lived the family of the junior partner.

The chief reason for selecting the locality of the offices—which did not sound, Mr. Lovegrove said, an altogether "professional" address—was that he might enjoy the advantage of residing at his place of business; of being, as he was fond of mentioning, "on the spot."

"That is exactly what I *don't* want," said Mr. Frost. And accordingly he inhabited a house at Bayswater.

But the Lovegroves, especially the female Lovegroves, declared in family conclave that Mr. Frost lived at Bayswater rather than at Bedford-square, because Mrs. Frost deemed Bedford-square vulgar. She was reported to have asked where it was, with a vague air of wonder, as of an inquirer into the geography of Central Africa. And Augustus Lovegrove, junior, the only son of the family, gave an imitation of Mrs. Frost setting out to visit her husband's office, furnished with a sandwich-case and a flask of sherry, as though for a long journey; and mimicked the tone of fashionable boredom in which she asked the coachman where one changed horses to go to Bedford-square. But that, said his sisters, was only Gus's fun.

In fact, there was a suppressed, but not the less deadly, feud between the houses of Frost and Lovegrove on all social points.

In their business relations the two partners seldom jarred.

Mr. Frost was a much cleverer man than Mr. Lovegrove. He was also the better educated of the two, and nature had gifted him with a commanding person and an impressive address.

Mr. Lovegrove was a common-place individual. He said of himself that he had a great power of sticking to business: and he said truly. Mr. Frost entirely appreciated his partner's solid and unobtrusive merits. He declared Lovegrove to be "a thoroughly safe dependable fellow." And the flavour of patronage in his approbation was in no degree distasteful to Mr. Lovegrove.

In the office, their respective qualities and acquirements were the complement of each other; and they agreed admirably. Out of the office, their views were so dissimilar as to be antagonistic.

Mr. Lovegrove was a very devout high churchman, and shook his head gravely over Mr. Frost's want of orthodoxy. Indeed, to describe Mr. Frost's opinions as unorthodox was to characterise them with undue mildness. Mr. Frost was a confirmed sceptic, and his scepticism was nearly allied to cynicism.

There is a homely illustration immortalised by the pen of a great modern writer, which may, perhaps, convey an idea of the state of Mr. Frost's mind.

In one of that great writer's well-known pages, political reformers are warned when they empty the dirty water out of the tub, not to send the baby whose ablutions have been made in it floating down the kennel likewise. Get rid of the dirty water by all means: but—save the baby!

Now Mr. Frost, it was to be feared, had not saved the baby.

Then the women of the two families did

not stand in amicable relations towards each other. Mrs. Lovegrove was envious of Mrs. Frost, and Mrs. Frost was disdainful of Mrs. Lovegrove.

The two husbands would occasionally remonstrate, each with the wife of his bosom, respecting this inconvenient, not to say reprehensible, state of things; and would openly, in marital fashion, wonder why the deuce the women were so spiteful and so silly!

"I wish, Georgy," Mr. Frost would say, "that you would behave with decent civility to Lovegrove's wife when you meet her. She does not come in your way often. I think it very selfish that you will not make the least effort to oblige me, when I have told you so often how serious an inconvenience it would be to me to have any coolness with Lovegrove."

"Why can't you get on with Mrs. Frost, Sarah?" Mr. Lovegrove would ask, gravely. "I and Frost never have a word together; and two more different men you would scarcely find."

But none the less did a feeling of animosity smoulder in the breasts of the two ladies. And perhaps the chief circumstance that prevented the feeling from breaking out into a blaze, was the wide distance which separates Bayswater from Bedford-square.

At the latter place, Mr. Frost had a little private room, the last and smallest of a suite of three, opening one within the other, which looked on to a smoke-blackened yard, some five feet square. Mr. Frost had shut out the view of the opposite wall by the expedient of having his window frame filled with panes of coloured glass. This diminished the already scanty quantity of daylight that was admitted into the room. But Mr. Frost neither came to his office very early, nor remained there very late, so that his work there was done during those hours of the day in which, when the sun shone at all, he sent his beams in through the red and purple panes of the window.

It was understood in the office that when Mr. Frost closed the outer one of the green-baize double doors which shut in his private room, he was not to be disturbed save on the most pressing and important business. So long as only the inner door remained closed, Mr. Frost was accessible to six-and-eightpence-yielding mortals. But when once the weight which usually kept the outer door open was removed, and the dark green portal had swung to, with a swift

noiseless passage of the cords over their pulleys, then no clerk in the employ of the firm, scarcely even Mr. Lovegrove himself, willingly undertook the task of disturbing the privacy of the senior partner.

And yet one morning, soon after Hugh Lockwood's return to London, Mrs. Lockwood walked into the offices at Bedford-square, and required that Mr. Frost should be informed of her presence; despite the fact, carefully pointed out to her notice, that Mr. Frost's room was shut by the outer door; and that, consequently, Mr. Frost was understood to be particularly engaged.

"I feel sure that Mr. Frost would see me, if you would be good enough to take in my name," said the little woman, looking into the face of the clerk who had spoken to her.

There was something almost irresistible in the composed certainty of her manner. Neither were the ladylike neatness of her dress, and the soft, sweet, refined tone of her voice, without their influence on the young man.

"Have you an appointment?" he asked, hesitating.

"Not precisely an appointment for this special morning. But I have frequently been admitted at this hour by Mr. Frost. If you will kindly take in my name to him, I am quite willing to assume the responsibility of disturbing him."

"Well, you see, ma'am, that's just what you *can't* do. The responsibility must be on my shoulders, whether it turns out that I am doing right or wrong. However, since you say that Mr. Frost has seen you at this time, before— Perhaps you can give me a card to take in to him."

Mrs. Lockwood took a little note-book out of her pocket, tore off a blank page, and wrote on it with the neatest of tiny pencils, the initials Z. L.

"I have no card," she said, smiling, "but if you will show Mr. Frost that paper, I think you will find that he will admit me."

The clerk disappeared, and returned in a few moments, begging the lady to step that way.

The lady did step that way, and the green-baize door closed silently behind her short, trim, black figure.

Mr. Frost was seated at a table covered with papers. On one side, and within reach of his hand, stood a small cabinet full of drawers. It was a handsome antique piece of furniture, of inlaid wood; and would have seemed more suited to a lady's

boudoir than to a lawyer's office. But there was in truth very little of what Mr. Lovegrove called "the shop" about the furniture or fittings of this tiny sanctum. The purple carpet was soft and rich, the walls were stained of a warm stone-colour, and the two easy chairs—the only seats which the small size of the room gave space for—were covered with morocco leather of the same hue as the carpet. Over the chimney-piece hung a landscape; one of the blackest and shiniest that Wardour-street could turn out. Mr. Frost called it (and thought it) a *Salvator Rosa*.

The only technical belongings visible in the room, were a few carefully selected law books, on a spare shelf near the window.

"Lovegrove does all the pounce and parchment business," Mr. Frost was wont to say, jocosely. "He likes it."

But no client who had ever sat in the purple morocco easy-chair opposite to Mr. Frost, failed to discover that, however much that gentleman might profess to despise those outward and visible symbols of his profession which he characterised generically as pounce and parchment, yet he was none the less a keen, acute, practical, hard-headed lawyer.

Mr. Frost looked up from his papers as Mrs. Lockwood quietly entered the room.

His face wore a look of care, and almost of premature age; for his portly upright figure, perfectly dark hair, and vigour of movement, betokened a man still in the prime of his strength. But his face was livid and haggard, and his eyebrows were surmounted by a complex series of wrinkles, which drew together in a knot, that gave him the expression of one continually and painfully at work in the solution of some weighty problem.

He rose and shook hands with Mrs. Lockwood, and then waved her to the chair opposite to his own.

"Tell me at once," he said, folding his hands before him on the table and slightly bending forward as he addressed the widow, "if your business is really pressing. I scarcely think there is another person in London whom I would have admitted at this moment."

"My business is pressing. And I am much obliged to you," replied Mrs. Lockwood, looking at him steadily.

"You think, with your usual incredulity, that I had no real occupation when your visit interrupted me. Sometimes, I grant you, I shut myself in here for a little—Hah! I was going to say *peace*!—for a

little quiet, for leisure to think for myself, instead of hiring out my thinking faculties to other people. But to-day it was not so. Look here!"

He pointed to the mass of papers under his hand (on the announcement of Mrs. Lockwood's approach he had thrown a large sheet of blotting-paper over them), and fluttered them rapidly with his fingers. "I have been going through these, and was only half-way when you came."

"Bills?" said Mrs. Lockwood.

"Some bills, and some—Yes; chiefly bills. But they all need looking at."

As he spoke he thrust them aside with a careless gesture, which half hid them once more under the blotting-paper.

Mrs. Lockwood's observant eyes had perceived that one of them bore the heading of a fashionable milliner's establishment.

"I am sorry," she said, "to interrupt the calculation of your wife's bonnet bills; but I really must intrude my prosaic business on your notice."

"What a bitter little weed you are, Zillah!" rejoined Mr. Frost, leaning back in his chair and regarding her thoughtfully.

"You have no right to say so."

"The best right; for I know you. I don't complain——"

"Oh! you don't complain!" she echoed, with a short soft laugh.

"No," he proceeded; "I do not complain that your tongue is steeped in wormwood sometimes; for I know that you have not found life full of honey. Neither, have I, Zillah. If you knew my anxieties, my sleepless nights, my——But you would not believe me, even if I had time and inclination to talk about myself. What is it that you want with me this morning?"

"I want my money."

"Have you come here to say that?"

"That's the gist of what I have come to say. I put it crudely, because shortly. But you and I know very well that that is always the burden of the tale."

"Do you expect me to take out a pocket-book full of bank-notes, and hand them to you across the table, like a man in a play? But," he added, after a momentary struggle with his own temper, "it is worse than useless for us to jangle. You are too sensible a woman to have come here merely for the pleasure of dunning me. Tell me what has induced you to take this step?"

"I desired to speak with you. To the first note I sent you, asking you to call in Gower-street, I got no answer——"

"I was engaged day and night at the

time. I meant to come to you as soon as I had an hour's leisure."

"To the second note you replied that you were going out of town for three days."

"It was quite true. I only got back last night."

"And therefore I came here this morning."

"Has anything new happened?"

"Something new is always happening. Hugh is bent on setting up for himself. His father's friends in the country have urged him to do so."

"It would be folly on his part to leave Digby and West for the next year or so. I give this opinion just as I should if I were asked for advice by a perfect stranger. You doubtless think that I am actuated by some underhand motive."

"No; I do not think so. And, moreover, I should agree with you in your opinion, if I did not know that Hugh is entitled to a sum of money which would suffice to make the experiment he contemplates a judicious instead of a rash one."

"I do not see that."

"Hugh, at all events, has the right to judge for himself."

"And you have the right to influence his judgment."

"Sometimes I am tempted—nay, often, very often, I am tempted—to tell Hugh everything, and let him fight his own fight. I am so tired of it!"

"Tell him then!" ejaculated Mr. Frost, impatiently. "I, too, am weary, God knows!"

"You have the power to put an end to your weariness and to my importunities. Do me justice. After all, I am but claiming what is my own."

"It is your own. I know it. I have never sought to deny it. You cannot say that I have."

He rose with a quick, irritable movement from his chair, and stood leaning against the mantel-piece, with his back to the empty grate.

"Then why not restore it at once, and end this weary business?"

"Surely you must understand that such a sum is not to be had at a moment's notice!"

"A moment's notice! How many years is it since you promised me that it should be restored as soon as Hugh came of age?"

"I know, I know. But, during this last year or two there have been embarrassments, and—difficulties."

Mrs. Lockwood leaned her head on her hand, and looked up at him. "Do you

know," she said, slowly, "what I begin to be afraid of? That you have been telling me the truth lately, and that you really are in pecuniary difficulties!"

The blood rushed darkly over the lawyer's face, but he met her look with a smile and an ironical raising of the eyebrows.

"Upon my word," he said, "you are civil—and ingenious! You begin to be 'afraid that I have been telling you the truth!' I presume you have hitherto supposed that I kept your cash in hard, round, yellow sovereigns, locked up in a box, and that I had nothing to do but to take them out whenever I chose, and hand them over to you! I am sorry that I cannot altogether dissipate your apprehensions. I have been telling you the truth, but, nevertheless, your money is safe!"

The air of superiority in the man, his voice and bearing, were not without their effect on Mrs. Lockwood. She faltered a moment. Then she said, "You can at least name some time for a settlement, can you not? Give me some fixed date to look forward to. I have been very patient."

"Look here, Zillah, I have a very advantageous thing in view. It will be highly lucrative, if it comes off as I anticipate. It has been proposed to me to go abroad in the character of legal adviser to a very wealthy and powerful English company, and—"

"To go abroad!"

"Temporarily. For a few months merely. It is a question of obtaining a concession for some important works from the Italian government. If the affair succeeds, I shall be in a position not only to pay you back your own—that," he added, watching her face, "is a matter of course in any case—but to advance Hugh's prospects very materially. Will you have a little more patience, and a little more faith, and wait until the winter?"

"Six months?" said Mrs. Lockwood, wearily.

"Yes; six months. Say six months! And meanwhile—as for Hugh, since he knows nothing, he will be suffering no suspense."

"Hugh? No, thank God! If it had been a question of subjecting my son instead of myself to the grinding of hope deferred, the matter should have been settled in one way or the other years ago!"

Mr. Frost looked at the small, frail figure before him; at the pale, delicate-featured face, framed in its soft grey curls; and he



wondered at the strength of resolution to endure that was expressed in every curve of her mouth, in the firmness of her attitude, as she stood with her little nervous hands clasped in front of her, in the steadiness of the dark eyes whose setting was so worn and tear-stained.

"Good-by, Zillah," he said, taking her hand; "I will come to Gower-street, soon."

"Yes; you had better come. Hugh misses you. He wants to talk to you about his plans, he says."

"I shall give him the advice I told you—to stay with Digby and West for at least another year, on the terms they offer. Bless my life, it is no such hardship! What hurry is there for him to undertake the responsibilities and cares of a professional man who has, or thinks he has," added Mr. Frost, hastily correcting himself, "nothing in the world to depend upon but his own exertions?"

Mrs. Lockwood made as though she were about to speak, and then checked herself with a little, quick sigh.

"Zillah!" said Mr. Frost, taking again the hand he had relinquished, and bending down to look into her face, "there is something new! You have not told me all that is in your mind."

"Because what is in my mind on this subject is all vague and uncertain. But I fancy—I think—that Hugh has fallen in love."

"Ah, you are like the rest of the women, and put your real meaning into the postscript. I *knew* there was something you had to say."

"I did not mean to say it at all. It is only a surmise——"

"I have considerable faith in the accuracy of your surmises. And it furnishes a likely enough motive for Hugh's hot haste to make himself a place in the world. Can you guess at the woman?"

"I know her. She is a girl of barely eighteen. She lives in my house."

"What! that Lady—Lady——"

"Lady Tallis Gale's niece, Miss Desmond."

"Stay! Where did I hear of her? Oh, I have it! Lovegrove is trustee under her mother's will. She has a mere pittance secured to her out of the wreck of her father's fortune. Besides, those kind of people, though they may be almost beggars, would, ten to one, look down on your son from the height of their family grandeur. This girl's father was one of the Power-Desmonds, a beggarly, scatter-

brained, spendthrift, Irish—gentleman! I dare say the young lady has been taught to be proud of her (probably hypothetical) descent from a savage inferior to a Zulu Kaffir."

"Very likely. But your eloquence is wasted on me. You should talk to Hugh. I'm afraid he has set his heart on this."

"Set his heart! Hugh is—how old? Three-and-twenty?"

"Hugh will be twenty-five in August."

"Ah! Think of a woman of your experience talking of a young fellow of that age having 'set his heart' on anything! No doubt he has 'set his heart.' And how many times will it be set and unset again before he is thirty?"

"God forbid that Hugh should be such a man as some whom my experience has taught me to know!"

"Humph! Just now this love on which Hugh has 'set his heart,' was a mere surmise on your part. Now you declare it to be a serious and established fact, and 'God forbid' it should not be!"

"When will you come?" asked Mrs. Lockwood, disregarding the sneer.

"I will come to-morrow evening, if I *can*. You know that my time is not mine to dispose of."

"True. But it is sometimes easier to dispose of that which belongs to other people than of one's own rightful property, is it not?"

With this Parthian dart, Mrs. Lockwood disappeared, gliding noiselessly out of the small room, through the next chamber, and acknowledging by a modest, quiet, little bend of the head the respectful alacrity of the clerk who had first admitted her, in rising to open the door for her exit.

## AS THE CROW FLIES.

DUE SOUTH. WINCHESTER TO LYMINGTON.

THE crow looks down on the White City optically, not intellectually. He sees many houses in a cluster, the shape of a woolpack, nipped in the centre by the girdle of the High-street. The old city of the Roman weavers and huntsmen, and of the West Saxon kings, lies healthily and pleasantly in a snug valley between two sheltering steep chalk hills, the river Itchen running on its border. This is the city where Edward the Third established the wool staple, where Richard the First was recrowned on his return from his Austrian prison, the city which Simon de Montford sacked, the city where Richard the Second held a parliament—the city twice besieged and taken during the Civil Wars.

The houses of Winchester are ranged round

the cathedral, like so many pawns round a king at chess. This building is a small history of England in itself. It dates back to some early British king, and was subsequently turned into a Pagan temple. St. Swithin, Bishop of Winchester (852-863), was the patron saint whose relics were here honoured for many centuries. The worthy man had originally snug lying in the churchyard, but his successor, Bishop Athelwold, removed the honoured bones from a chapel outside the north door of the nave, and placed them in a glistening golden shrine behind the cathedral altar. The removal of the relics was at first frustrated by forty days' miraculous rain, and it hence became a popular belief, first in Hampshire, then all over England, that if there were rain on St. Swithin's Day (July 15), it would rain for forty days after, according to the old rhyme :

St. Swithin's day if thou doth rain,  
For forty days it will remain;  
St. Swithin's day if thou be fair,  
For forty days 'twill rain a mair.

But the crow must for a moment be biographical. In a recent number he gave a sketch of the career of an old soldier in the reign of Henry the Fifth; he will now give an outline of the life of a prelate in the reign of Edward the Third. The old cathedral was rebuilt by Bishop Wakelin, 1079, with Isle of Wight limestone and Hempage oak. Bishop De Lucy carried the work further, and Bishop Edington began the nave that William of Wykeham continued; and that great statesman lies in effigy still in his beautiful chantry, arrayed in cope and mitre, his pillow supported by angels, and three stone monks praying at his feet.

William of Wykeham, born in 1344, and the son of poor parents, was educated by Nicolas Uvedale, governor of Winchester. While still young he became architect to Edward the Third, and rebuilt part of Windsor Castle. He then took holy orders, and was made curate of Pulham, in Norfolk. Step by step Wykeham rose to the highest dignities: being first, secretary to the king, lastly, Chancellor of England and Bishop of Winchester. Compelled to resign office by a cabal to prevent all priests holding civil employments, the bishop applied himself to building and endowing New College, Oxford, and a college at Winchester, originally the enlargement of a small grammar school, to which the founder himself had been sent as a child by his kind patron, Sir Nicolas Uvedale. When Edward the Third retired to Eltham to mourn over the loss of the Black Prince, the Duke of Lancaster (John of Gaunt), the real sovereign for the time, persecuted Wykeham, drove him from parliament, and seized all his temporalities. Richard the Second, however, rehabilitated him. The minister resigned when he found the young king recklessly rushing to ruin, henceforward devoted himself to good works, and died in 1404. Winchester owes much to this great prelate, for he procured the charter for the city as a wool staple, and he restored that admirable charity, the Hospital of St. Cross, just

outside the town, originally founded by Bishop de Blois, in 1136, for thirteen poor men. Shakespeare's Cardinal Beaufort increased it and added the distinct establishment of "The Almshouse of Noble Poverty," for thirty-five brethren and three attendant nuns. This great cardinal lies in the cathedral in a chantry of his own, opposite Bishop Waynflete. It was mutilated by the Puritan soldiers when they stabled their horses in Winchester choir. In spite of the Bard and Sir Joshua, Beaufort never murdered his rival Gloucester, nor did he die in a torture of remorse, but, on the contrary, as an eye-witness tells us, he made a goodly ending of it. "Unscrupulous in the choice of his instruments" the cardinal may have been, but he was undoubtedly a great statesman, firm, far-seeing, and fertile in resources.

A plain marble slab in Prior Silkstede's Chapel marks the tomb of an illustrious angler, honest Fleet-street tradesman, and excellent writer, Isaac Walton, who died in 1683, at the house of his son-in-law, Dr. Hawkins, a prebendary of Winchester. His epitaph, probably written by Bishop Ken (the author of the Evening Hymn), his brother-in-law, is well worthy the excellent man it records:

Alas! he's gone before—  
Gone to return no more.  
Our panting breasts aspire  
After their aged sire,  
Whose well-spent life did last  
Full ninety years and past;  
But now he hath begun  
That which will ne'er be done;  
Crown'd with eternal bliss,  
We wish our souls with his.

Every stone of this old cathedral, has its legend. At the altar Edward the Confessor was crowned, and in the nave his mother, Emma, falsely accused of incontinence, passed safely, blindfold, over the ordeal of nine red-hot ploughshares. In this building lies a son of King Alfred; here, at the high altar, Canute, after his rebuke on the Southampton shore to his courtiers, hung up his golden crown, and here he was afterwards interred.

Rufus, the successor of the Conqueror, delighted in Winchester because it was so near the Hampshire forests. Indeed the rapacious rascal had reason to like it, since on the death of his father he had scooped out of the Winchester treasury sixty thousand pounds of silver besides gold and precious stones. Rufus died detested by his subjects, and the monks he had plundered, but he left two things to be remembered—the White Tower that he completed, and the Great Hall at Westminster, that he put together. The plain tomb of the tyrant, whom no one lamented, is still existing—a stumbling-block nearly in the centre of the choir at Winchester Cathedral.

Winchester has twice been glorified by the splendour of royal marriages—a happy and an unhappy alliance. The first was in February, 1403, when Henry the Fourth married Joanna of Navarre. This sensible and amiable woman was the daughter of Charles the Bad and the widow of John the valiant Duke of Bretagne;

Henry was a widower, his first wife having been Mary de Bohun, with whom early in life he had eloped from the old castle the crow has already visited at Pleshy. Joanna started from Camaret, a small port near Brest, and arrived at Falmouth storm-driven, attended by her two infant daughters, Blanche and Marguerite, their nurses, and a gay crowd of Breton and Navarrese attendants. The fair widow of France was a beautiful woman, with small regular features and a broad forehead. Her handsome husband-elect received her at Winchester, attended by many lords and knights. The marriage took place with great pomp in the ancient royal city at the church of St. Swithin. The bridal feast was thought very costly, and was remarkable for two courses of fish and the introduction of crowned eagles and crowned panthers in confectionery during intervals of the meal.

After her husband's death Joanna got on but badly, for her step-son, Henry the Fifth, plundered her of half her dowry, and accused her of witchcraft. She had also to mourn when the nation that had adopted her was rejoicing, for her son Arthur, attacking our outposts at Agincourt with a whirlwind of French cavalry, was desperately wounded, struck down, and taken prisoner. Her son-in-law the Duke d'Alençon, who had cloven Henry's jewelled helmet, was also slain in the same battle, and her brother, the Constable of France, died of his wounds the following day. Joanna ended her troubled life at Havering-atte-Bower, in 1437, and her ghost is supposed still to haunt the ruins of the palace there. Joanna's arms, an ermine collared and chained, were formerly conspicuous in the windows of Christchurch, near Newgate.

The next royal wedding at Winchester was the ill-omened and fruitless union of Mary and Philip. The gloomy Spanish king, with the projecting jaw and the hard cruel eyes, landed at Southampton, with the Duke of Alba and other memorable Spanish nobles. He was dressed in plain black velvet, a black cap hung with gold chains, and a red felt cloak. Gardiner, the notorious Bishop of Winchester, escorted him to that venerable city with a train of one hundred and fifty gentlemen, dressed in black velvet and black cloth, and with rich gold chains round their necks. The cavalcade rode slowly over the heavy roads to Winchester, in a cruel and pitiless rain. On the next day, the 25th of July, St. James's day, took place the nuptials. The gloomy bridegroom wore white satin trunk-hose and a robe of rich brocade, bordered with pearls and diamonds. The ill-favoured bride was attired in a white satin gown and coif, scarlet shoes, and a black velvet scarf. The chair on which she sat, a present from the Pope, who had insufficiently blessed it, is still shown at the cathedral. Gardiner and Bonner were both present, rejoicing at the match, and four other bishops, stately with their croziers. Sixty Spanish grandees attended Philip. The hall of the episcopal palace where the bridal

banquet took place was hung with silk and gold striped arras, the plate was solid gold. The Winchester boys recited Latin epithalamiums, and were rewarded by the queen. A year after that time, Philip left Mary and England for ever.

One of the interesting historical events that have dignified Winchester, was the defiance hurled at Henry the Fifth, just about to embark at Southampton for his invasion of Normandy, by the gallant French ambassador, the Archbishop of Bruges. On Henry saying, through the Archbishop of Canterbury, that he would not rest satisfied with anything short of all the territories formerly possessed by England, the French prelate replied that Henry would certainly be driven back to the sea, and lose either his liberty or his life. He then exclaimed, "I have done with England, and I demand my passport." Our chivalrous young king had never forgiven the Frenchmen's insolent present of a cask of tennis balls, in scorn of the wild excesses which had disgraced his youth.

"When I use them," he said, bitterly, "I will strike them back with such a racket as shall force open Paris gates!"

After his house at Newmarket was burnt down, Charles the Second squandered nearly twenty thousand pounds, according to Evelyn, in building a palace on the site of the old castle. It was to have cost thirty-five thousand pounds, and to have been a hunting seat. The first stone was laid by the swarthy king in person, March 23, 1683. James stopped the building, but Queen Anne came to see, and wished to have completed it for her dully respectable husband, Prince George of Denmark. In the French war of 1756, five thousand prisoners cooked their soup and cursed the English within its walls; in 1792 some poor famished French curés occupied it; and in 1796 it became what it has since been; a common barrack. Wren's design included a large cupola, sixty feet above the roof, that was to have been a sea mark, and a handsome street leading in a direct line from the cathedral to the palace.

It was at Winchester, in August, 1685, that the detestable Judge Jeffreys began the butchery that King James so much desired, with the trial of dame Alicia Lisle, a venerable and respected woman of more than seventy, the widow of one of Cromwell's lords (one of King Charles's judges, some say) who had been assassinated at Lausanne by the Royalists. She was accused of harbouring John Hickes, a Nonconformist divine, and Richard Nelthorpe, a fugitive lawyer, who had dabbled in the Rye House Plot. The chief witness, a man named Dunne, living at Warminster, deposed that some days after the battle of Sedgemoor (which was in July), a short, swarthy, dark-haired man sent him to Lady Lisle at Moyles Court, near Fordingbridge, to know if she could give Hickes shelter. Lady Lisle desired them to come on the following Tuesday, and on the evening of that day he escorted two horsemen, "a full, fat, black man, and a thin

black man." A Wiltshire man, whom they paid to show them the way over the plain, betrayed them to Colonel Penruddock, who early the next morning discovered Hickes hidden in the malthouse, and Nelthorpe in a hole in a chimney. Lady Lisle's defence was that she knew Hickes to be a Nonconformist minister against whom a warrant was issued, but she did not know he had been with the Duke of Monmouth. As for Nelthorpe, she did not even know his name; she had denied him to the soldiers, only from fear, as they were rude and insolent, and were with difficulty restrained from plundering the house. Lady Lisle then avowed that she abhorred the Monmouth plot, and that the day on which King Charles was beheaded she had not gone out of her chamber, and had shed more tears for him than any woman then living, as the late Countess of Monmouth, my Lady Marlborough, my Lord Chancellor Hyde, and twenty persons of the most eminent quality could bear witness. Moreover, she said, her son had been sent by her to bear arms on the king's side, and it was she who had bred him up to fight for the king. Jeffreys, eager to spill blood at the first case of treason on the circuit, and seeing the jury waver, roared and bellowed blasphemy at Dunne, who became too frightened to speak.

"I hope," cried this model judge, "I hope, gentlemen of the jury, you take notice of the strange and horrible carriage of this fellow, and withal you cannot but observe the spirit of this sort of people, what a villanous and devilish one it is. A Turk is a saint to such a fellow as this; many a Pagan would be ashamed to have no more truth in him. Blessed Jesus, what a generation of vipers! Dost thou believe that there is a God? Dost thou believe thou hast a precious and immortal soul? Dost—"

"I cannot tell what to say, my lord," stammered poor tormented Dunne.

Jeffreys: "Good God, was there ever such an impudent rascal! Hold the candle up that we may see his brazen face."

Dunne: "My lord, I am so baulked I do not know what I say. Tell me what you would have me say, for I am shattered out of my senses."

Placid Judge: "Why, prithee, man, there is nobody baulks thee but thy own self. Thou art asked questions as plain as anything in the world can be; it is only thy own haughty depraved heart that baulks both thy honesty and understanding, if thou hast any; it is thy studying how to prevaricate that puzzles and confounds thy intellect; but I see all the pains in the world, and all compassion and charity is lost upon thee, and therefore will say no more to thee."

The jury were long in discussion, and three times brought in Alicia Lisle not guilty, but they succumbed at last to the judge's threats and denunciations. The poor charitable woman was condemned to be burnt to death on the next day. The clergy of Winchester Cathedral remonstrated against the cruel haste, and Jeffreys,

not wishing to destroy the sociability of his visit, postponed the execution for five days. In the mean time there was great intercession made. The only mercy James had the heart to show was to commute the sentence from burning to beheading. On the afternoon of September the 2nd she suffered death on a scaffold in the market-place, and underwent her fate with serene courage and Christian resolution. Her last words were forgiveness to all who had done her wrong. In the first year of William and Mary the attainer was reversed, and Lady Lisle's two daughters, Triphena and Bridget, were restored to all their former rights.

Winchester Castle was destroyed by Cromwell. The hall (formerly called the chapel) now only remains. The famous Round Table, framed by Merlin, still hangs on the east end. Henry the Eighth and Charles the Fifth came to see this relic, whose date is uncertain. There are bullet marks on it, said to be the work of Cromwell's relic-despising musketeers.

The crow skims to Southampton, and alights on the Bar-gate, just above the sullen figures of Sir Bevis and Ascapart. This Ascapart was a loathly giant whom Sir Bevis subdued with sword and spear, and coerced into more or less patient bondage. Only half tamed, however, this Caliban mutinied on one occasion in the absence of his master, and carried off Josyan the Bright, wife of Sir Bevis, whose knights soon tracked out and slew the foul felon. Sir Bevis lived on the mount three quarters of a mile above the Bar. This noble paladin, after much fighting, died on the same day with his loving wife, Josyan, and his horse Arundel. The Venice galleys that in the middle ages brought to the Hampshire coast Indian spices, Damascus carpets, Murano glass, and Levant wine, no doubt took back with them English cloth and English legends. Mr. Rawdon Brown tells us that to this day the "History of Sir Bevis of Hampton," is a stock piece at the Venetian puppet-show theatres.

The crow must not forget that it was on the shore near Southampton (not at Bosham as Sussex antiquaries insist on having it) that Canute, to rebuke his Danish courtiers, who beheld in him a monarch feared by the English, Scotch, Welsh, Danish, Swedes, and Norwegians, commanded the tide to recede, and respect its sovereign. Indeed a daring Southampton man has satisfactorily settled the site of the story by erecting a public-house near the Docks called "The Canute Castle."

Our bird rejoices in Southampton, not because it was once a depôt for Cornish tin; because Charles the Fifth embarked from here; because Richard the First here assembled his fleet for the crusades, and took on board eight hundred protesting Hampshire hogs, and ten thousand horse-shoes; or because our army for Crecy embarked here, but because it is eminently a Shakespearian place, like many others he has visited. Here, as the depôt for Cordovan leather, Alexandrian sugar, and for Bordeaux and Rochelle wine, the favourite place of embarkation indeed for Nor-



mandy and Guienne, the chivalrous king gathered together in 1450 his one thousand five hundred sail, his six thousand men-at-arms, his twenty-four thousand archers, and Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol. Shakespeare has given a splendid panorama of the scene :

Suppose that you have seen  
The well-appointed king at Hampton pier  
Embark his royalty ; and his brave fleet  
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.

O, do but think,  
You stand upon the rivage, and behold  
A city on the inconstant billows dancing ;  
For so appears this fleet majestic,  
Holding due course to Hardeur.

It was just at starting that the discovery took place of the conspiracy which Shakespeare has also dramatised. The king's cousin Richard, Earl of Cambridge, had conspired with Henry's favourite councillors and companions, Sir Thomas Grey and Lord Scrope of Masham, to ride to the frontiers of Wales, and there proclaim the Earl of March the rightful heir to the crown of Richard the Second, if that monarch were really dead, which some still doubted. The three conspirators were all executed, and their bones lie in the chapel of the Domus Dei, an ancient hospital in Winkle-street.

Bevis Mount, just outside Southampton, was the residence of Lord Peterborough, the general who drove the French out of Spain in the War of the Succession, and the steady friend, first of Dryden, then of Pope, Swift, and all their set. He spent the latter part of his stirring life at his "wild romantic cottage" with his second wife, Anastasia Robinson, a celebrated singer, whom for a long time his pride forbade him to publicly acknowledge. Pope often visited him here, particularly in the autumn of 1735, just before the earl started for Lisbon, in which voyage he died. Pope pays the veteran several compliments, talks of his gardening, and his taming

The genius of the stubborn plain  
Almost as quickly as he conquer'd Spain.

The poet also describes the Spanish flags and trophy guns which the eccentric old general had arranged over his garden-gate.

Peterborough travelled so furiously fast, that the wits said of him that he had talked to more kings and more postilions than any man in Europe ; and Queen Anne's ministers used to say that they always wrote *at* him, not to him. Swift has sketched him with kindly sarcasm :

Mordaunt gallops on alone ;  
The roads are with his followers strewn ;  
This breaks a girth, and that a bone.

His body, active as his mind,  
Returning sound in limb and wind,  
Except some leather lost behind.

A skeleton in outward figure,  
His meagre corpse, though full of vigour,  
Would halt behind him, were it bigger.

So wonderful his expedition,  
When you have not the least suspicion,  
He's with you like an apparition.

That excellent little man, Dr. Isaac Watts, is

also one of the prides of Southampton, having been born at a small red-brick house (21, French-street), in 1674. His father, a humble schoolmaster, had suffered much for his nonconformity ; and once, when her husband was in prison, the wife was seen sitting on a stone outside the door, suckling little Isaac.

From Southampton to the New Forest's sixty-four thousand acres, is a mere flap of the wing to the crow at his best speed. The beech glades, alive with countless squirrels, the ridings echoing with the swift hoofs of half-wild ponies, the great arcades of oak-trees lie before him. It was long supposed that this wild district was first turned into hunting ground by William the Conqueror. According to one old chronicler the savage Norman, "who loved the tall deer as if he were their father," and made it a hanging matter to kill a stag, destroyed fifty-two mother churches and effaced countless villages, in a space thirty miles long : but this is untrue. It is true that thirty manors around Lyndhurst, in the green heart of the forest, ceased to be cultivated ; but the Gurths and Wambas, the serfs, and thralls, and villains were not driven away. The only two churches mentioned in Domesday Book—Milford and Brockenhurst—still exist ; and, indeed, immediately after the afforestation, a church was built at Boldre, and another at Hordle. The real grievance, therefore, with the Hampshire Saxons, thirteen years after the Conquest, was the placing a larger district than before under the cruel Norman forest law. The deaths in the forest by chance arrow wounds of Rufus, the Conqueror's youngest son Richard, and also of an illegitimate son of Duke Robert, were looked upon by the Saxon peasants as the result of divine vengeance. There are no red deer now in the forest, as when Mr. Howitt wrote his delightful sketches of the scenery, and saw, "awaking as from a dream, one deep shadow, one thick and continuous roof of boughs, and thousands of hoary boles, standing clothed, as it were, with the very spirit of silence." The stirrup of Rufus still hangs in the Queen's House at Lyndhurst. The moat of Malwood Keep, where Rufus slept the night before his death, can still be traced near Stony Cross, on the Minstead road. The cottage of Purkiss, the charcoal-burner who found his body, is still shown to those who care to believe in it. Through Boldre wood, Rufus and the hunters rode on the day when Tyrrell's arrow flew awry. Away above Sopley, on the main road from Christchurch to Ringwood, is Tyrrelsford, where the frightened French knight forded the Avon on his way to Poole, to embark for Normandy ; and close by the ford stands the forge of the blacksmith who shod Tyrrel's horse. The fugitive is said to have slain this blacksmith to prevent his prating of such a horseman's having passed that way.

At Lymington—close to which is Baddesley, where, in the last century, a groaning elm for a year and a half caused much superstitious excitement—the crow, refreshed by a blue

glimpse of the Isle of Wight, turns smart for London and his old perch on St. Paul's, to rest a moment before he strikes due north.

### FASTING GIRLS.

THE public journals have lately told a strange story of the fasting girl of Wales; but it seems to be little known how frequent the instances of a similar kind have been, in past years.

Of course the fasting which is connected with religious ordinances is a different matter altogether. Voluntary abstinence being a kind of self-mortification, its inclusion amongst moral or religious duties is easily accounted for. The climate of the country and the habits of the people modify the custom in different regions; but if this were the proper place for such a topic, it might be conclusively shown that voluntary fasting, as a religious duty, has at one time or other held sway throughout almost every part of the world. Total abstinence for a certain length of time; a limitation to certain kinds of food; a limitation to one meal a day, with any choice of food; one meal a day, and of one kind of food only; these are among the various forms which the custom has presented.

Exceptional instances, however, unconnected with religion, and mostly arising (there is good reason to believe) out of a fraudulent intention to deceive, require to be well looked into by physicians. In rare examples it is a fasting man who appeals to our love of the marvellous. In 1531, one John Scott acquired much notoriety in this way. Being in a self-reproving spirit for some crime which he had committed, he took sanctuary in Holyrood Abbey, and abstained from food for thirty or forty days. This fact coming to the knowledge of the king (James the Fifth), Scott was shut up in a room in Edinburgh Castle with a little bread and water, which were found untouched at the end of thirty-two days. Afterwards the man visited many parts of Europe, proclaiming his power of abstaining from food for very long periods of time together; but there is no clear evidence whether his alleged achievements were ever investigated by persons competent to ferret out the truth. In 1760, a gentleman in London was reported to have lived ever since 1735 without meat, and with only water to drink; but this may not be inconsistent with what is now known by the name of vegetarianism. About the same time a French boy at Chateauroux was foodless (so far as was known) for a whole year; but his appetite returned when a particular malady left him, not however until he had become terribly emaciated. The journals of 1771 told of a Stamford man who, for the sake of a wager of ten pounds, kept himself for fifty-one days without any kind of solid food or milk; but here it would have been well to state what limitation of meaning was given to the word "solid." Dr. Willan records a case (dated 1786), of a young man who, under the

combined influence of bodily malady and morbid mental depression, resolved to retire from his friends and also to abstain from food. During fifty-one days he took no exercise, slept very little, wrote a great deal, ate no food, but moistened his mouth from time to time with a little water flavoured with orange juice, the quantity of drink thus taken being about half a pint a day. Ten days more passed in the same way, by the end of which time his bodily emaciation had become terrible to witness. His friends then found out the place of his retreat, and brought a physician to visit him; but ill-judged treatment failed to restore him—the hapless young man sank into the grave on the eleventh day, or the seventy-second day after the commencement of his voluntary fasting. Dr. Currie, of Liverpool, placed upon record a case, in which an elderly gentleman was literally starved to death through inability to swallow, on account of the formation of an irremovable tumour at the very bottom of the passage to the stomach. For twelve months he had a difficulty in swallowing food; then solid food refused completely to pass; then for thirteen days he could only take a few spoonfuls of liquid in the course of a day; and then, when all passage to the stomach was effectually and finally closed, he was kept alive for thirty-six days longer by baths of warm milk-and-water, combined with special medical treatment in other ways. The unfortunate gentleman, who had been both tall and stout, lessened in weight from two hundred and forty pounds to one hundred and thirty-eight pounds during this process of slow starvation; at the time of his death his mental powers were much less affected than his friends and his physician expected they would be.

As we have said, fasting women and girls have made more noise in the world than fasting men, and there has been more suspicion of trickery in the cases recorded. Considering the stories which the chroniclers of old days were wont to record, we need not wonder much at some of the narratives of fasting told by them. But, before noticing them, a word or two may be said concerning certain colliery accidents which have entailed great privation of food. Several years ago, at the Edmonston colliery, in Scotland, some of the brickwork of the shaft fell in, and closed up the mouth of the working level; thirteen persons were boxed up in darkness below for more than two days without food, and were then liberated by the exertions of the persons above ground. In 1813, at Wolverhampton, the sides of a coal mine fell in through a similar cause, and enclosed eight men and a boy in one of the workings, without light, without food, and with no other water than the drippings from the roof, which they caught in an iron pot. It was six days and a half before these pitmen were rescued—exhausted, but easily restored by careful treatment. Then there was the remarkable case at Brierly Hill, last March, when a coal-pit was flooded by a sudden inrush

of water, compelling thirteen men and boys to take refuge in such of the workings as still remained dry. From Tuesday, the sixteenth, to Monday, the twenty-second, they had no food; and yet all save one were brought up alive, and fully recovered.

But now for a few female examples. Cecilia de Rygeway, having been imprisoned in Nottingham jail for the murder of her husband, during the reign of Edward the Third (the year 1357), remained "mute and abstinent" for forty days, neither eating nor drinking during this time. It was considered so much in the nature of a religious sign or miracle that Dame Rygeway was pardoned by the king.

Coming down to later times, we find the case recorded by Plot, in his History of Staffordshire, of one Mary Waughton, who, during the whole of her life, was accustomed to live upon an incredibly small quantity of food and drink. A piece of bread-and-butter about the size of half-a-crown, or a piece of meat not larger than a pigeon's egg, was her daily ration; while for beverage she took only a spoonful or two of milk-and-water. We are told that she was a fresh-complexioned and healthy maiden; and Dr. Plot complacently demands credence for the story on the ground that she was "of the Church of England, and therefore the less likely to put a trick upon the world."

The eighteenth century produced many instances with which journalists were busy. One was the case of Christina Michelot, a young French girl, who, in 1751, took to a sudden fit of fasting after a serious attack of fever. It is not very clear whether she was actually unable or only unwilling to eat; but, according to the narrative, she took nothing but water from November, 1751, to July, 1755, a period of more than three years and a half, without any solid food whatever. During this time she advanced from her eleventh to her fifteenth year, after which she resumed the usual habits of eating and drinking. This case attracted much attention among French physicians at the time; as did likewise that of Maria Matcheteria among German physicians in 1774. This was a woman approaching middle age, who, after an attack of fever and nervous malady, became an involuntary faster. For two years, we are told, she took nothing but curds-and-whey and water, and for another year nothing whatever of food or drink. The fact was commented upon, however, that she swallowed a bit of the consecrated wafer once a week at the Eucharist; and from this it was inferred that she *could* swallow if she chose. How far disinclination, or dissimulation, or both, were mixed up in the case, it is impossible now to prove; but it may be very easily and sensibly guessed at.

Our own country, in the same century, presented many instances more or less resembling those of the French girl and the Swabian woman. Of these, two will suffice as illustrations. In 1762, Ann Walsh, a girl of twelve years old living at Harrogate, suddenly lost her appetite,

through causes not at all apparent. She left off solid food entirely, living upon one-third of a pint of wine-and-water daily; this continued for eighteen months, after which she recovered her normal state of appetite. Ten years later, in 1772, was presented that case which Pennant records in his Tour in Scotland. Katherine M'Leod of Ross-shire, at the age of thirty-five, was attacked with a fever which brought on almost total blindness, and also an inability to swallow food. It is averred that, for a year and three quarters, there was no evidence that food or drink passed down her throat, although a little was frequently put into her mouth. Pennant saw her in a miserable state of emaciation; but we have no record of her subsequent career.

Perhaps the most noted instance of all was that of the "Fasting Woman of Tutbury," not only for its marvels, but for its audacious fraud. During the early years of the present century she was the talk of the county, and of many other parts of England. In November, 1808, a surgeon resolved to visit her, and to ascertain as much of the truth as possible. She told him that her name was Ann Moore, that she was fifty-eight years of age, and that she had gone twenty months without food. According to her account, she had had a severe attack of illness in the year 1804, which lasted thirteen weeks. Her recovery was not complete, for she was troubled during many months afterwards with violent fits and spasms at frequent and regular intervals. Another inflammatory attack came on in 1805, and lasted eleven weeks. When she recovered from this, her fits and spasms were gone, but were followed by loss of appetite and difficulty of digestion. Her attendance in 1806, on a sick boy afflicted with a repulsive disease, decreased her power of assimilating food. From October in that year to February, 1807, she ate only a penny loaf in a fortnight, and drank a little tea without milk or sugar. From that time she lived (according to her own story) till November, 1808, without any solid food, taking only water and tea. The surgeon (who, by the way, was only V.S., not M.R.C.S.) could not detect any flaw in her story. When it was published in the Monthly Magazine, early in 1809, it made a prodigious sensation; and on this sensation the woman lived four years. At last, in 1813, a few scientific men in the neighbourhood determined to sift the matter to the bottom; for Ann Moore still continued to declare to the world that she took no solid food whatever, and only just liquid enough to moisten her tongue and lips. They got her to consent, as the only true test of her sincerity, to let them guard and watch her room, as a means of assuring that no food of any kind should be brought in. The woman was probably rendered very anxious by this ordeal, but could not positively refuse it without causing a suspicion of deception. The watch-and-ward began, and lasted nine days. The wretched creature bore the test thus far, and then gave in—terribly emaciated, and really almost

starved to death. She asked for food, recovered her strength, and signed her name (or made her mark) to the following confession: "I, Ann Moore, of Tutbury, humbly asking pardon of all persons whom I have attempted to deceive and impose upon, and, above all, with the most unfeigned sorrow and contrition imploring the Divine mercy and forgiveness of that God whom I have so greatly offended, do most solemnly declare that I have occasionally taken sustenance during the last six years."

The narrative which has recently attracted public attention has this feature: it is written by a physician who gives the guarantee of his own name to the words he writes, and takes responsibility for any scepticism he may express concerning what was told him, or what he *seemed* to see; for in matters of this kind it is not always safe to conclude that "seeing is believing." He is a district medical officer of one of the London unions. Being on an autumnal visit in the counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen, in the recent month of August, he heard a great deal about a certain fasting girl in the last-named shire, and resolved to investigate the matter by such tests as a physician might be able to apply. That she is a girl of thirteen years old, named Sarah Jacob, is as expressible in English as in Welsh; but when we are told that her father, a small tenant-farmer, lives at the village of Llethernoyaduecha, in the parish of Llanfihangelararth, we feel how great a gift it must be to be able to pronounce Welsh. The positive averment of the girl's parents was that, save a fortnightly moistening of her lips with cold water, she had taken neither food nor drink for twenty-three months; that she had had good health until about two years ago, when an attack of illness brought on vomiting of blood; that she had never since left her bed except to be lifted out; that the incapability of swallowing has remained unaltered throughout; and that the very sight of food is sufficient to bring on one of the fits to which she is subject.

Now, this was the story which was told to the physician by the parents of the girl. She herself spoke very little English—using Welsh in conversing with the parents. The very first thing which attracted his notice was that Sarah was evidently regarded as a *show* girl, an exhibition for curiosity-hunting visitors. "The child was lying in her bed decorated as a bride, having round her head a wreath of flowers, from which was suspended a smart riband, the ends of which were joined by a small bunch of flowers after the present fashion of ladies' bonnet-strings. Before her, at proper reading distance, was an open Welsh book, supported by two other books on her body. Across the fireplace, which was nearly opposite the foot of her bed, was an arrangement of shelves well stocked with English and Welsh books, the gifts of various visitors to the house." All this pretentious display aroused his suspicions, and determined him to note the accessory facts closely. His account is too long to be

given here in full; but the chief items may usefully be presented in a condensed form.

1. The girl's face was plump, her cheeks and lips of a rosy colour, her eyes bright and sparkling, and her muscular development very inconsistent with such (alleged) wonderful abstinence from food. 2. There was a restless movement and frequent looking out of the corners of the eyes, known to physicians as a concomitant of simulative disease. 3. The pulse was perfectly natural; the stethoscope told of sound lungs and heart, and of a stomach certainly not empty of liquid. 4. He was prevented, by excuses and expostulations on the part of the parents, from examining the girl's back—a test which would have told something to him as a medical man concerning the presence or absence of gastronomic action. 5. He was led to the conviction that the parents honestly believed what they said, but that they were deceived by the girl herself; for "the construction of the bed and the surrounding old Welsh cupboards and drawers in the room were all favourable to the concealment of food." 6. He was told that when watchers were, with permission, placed in the house, they were debarred from touching the bed—an inhibition which reduced the watching to an absurdity. The sum total was, that the physician arrived at these conclusions: that there was no physical cause to prevent this so-called bed-ridden fasting girl from rising from her bed and using her locomotive powers; that the power was there, but that the will was morbidly perverted; that the whole case was one of simulative hysteria in a young girl having the propensity to deceive very strongly developed; and that this tendency was further aided by a power of prolonged fasting, though not approaching in duration to that which was pretended. He acquits the parents of deceit (on what grounds is not very clear to us), but cannot shut his eyes to the fact that they made their patient a complete show-child, receiving money and presents from hundreds of visitors to the farm. Finally, he remarks, "Being made an object of curiosity, sympathy, and profit, is not only antagonistic to the girl's recovery, but also renders it extremely difficult for a medical man to determine how much of the symptoms is the result of a morbid perversion of will, and how much is the product of intentional deceit."

#### RIDING FOR HEALTH.

My horse is the direct consequence of my having enough to eat. Blest with a good appetite, and devoted to a sedentary pursuit, I became conscious of a liver directly I began to be successful. Revealing this discovery to my doctor, not without a certain pride, as becomes a man whose stock of information is increased, I was rewarded by the terms of opprobrium—"Torpid!" and



"Sluggish;" and was ordered to follow a course of regimen fitter for some sour anchorite than for a modern man of the world. Forewarned as to what part of my friend's prescription was likely to be, I had taken the bull by the horns, and said stoutly that I did not take much exercise, and that circumstances made it impossible for me to have more. Thereupon it was insisted I should become Cornaro and Mr. Banting figuratively rolled into one. My food was to be served with rigid plainness, my times of eating were fixed at impossible hours; my solids were to be taken by the ounce, and my liquids in the way I like them least. With all this, I was to devote an amount of time to my digestion and its needs, utterly incompatible with the business of life. Dining at two, P.M., I was to eat slowly and rest quietly after dinner; to chat during that meal, on light and agreeable topics only; and to shun all mention or thought of work, as poison. My evening repast was to be tea taken at seven o'clock to the minute, with perhaps an egg or a rasher of bacon as a relish; and I was to retire to rest in country air punctually at ten. By following this advice for a considerable time, my pestilent liver might become more active; but I must abide by it rigidly, unless, as the doctor assured me pleasantly, I wished to be a valetudinarian for life.

He might as well have told me to climb a greased pole, or to speak the language of the Cherokees off-hand. I was living chiefly at clubs, I dined out a good deal, I followed a calling especially inimical to regular hours. I compromised matters by dining at two o'clock, and at my usual hour of seven as well. I dined twice a day and got worse. Meanwhile, I became learned in the physiology of the human frame. The gastric juices became my well-known enemies. The alimentary canal, carbo-hydrates, the tissues, chyle, deglutition, and mastication, were all marshalled against me. The effect of acid in the system, and of want of tone, the connexion between physical ailments and mental depression, the precise symptoms heralding gout, the varieties of dyspepsia, sleepless nights, aches in the head, loads on the chest, weariness of the limbs, dulness of eye, and heaviness of spirit, were all mine.

Meanwhile, I reverted bitterly to the far-off days when the first thought was, not what one would eat, but whether one would eat at all; of long fasts made for economy; of resolute abstinence from lun-

cheons; of cheap banquets of chops and porter, and of perfect health. Malt liquors did no harm then, and nothing eatable disagreed. When you dined out, I said to myself, regretfully, you took the goods the gods provided, and were never the worse for them next day. Pastry? Why you would go into the nearest confectioner's, and buying penny puffs, would carry them off to your chop-house, there to make of them a second course! Cheese, butter, crude vegetables? You took them all in turns, and only did not eat them together because they were called extras, and charged for separately in the bill. Sit after dinner, chat pleasantly during the meal! How was it with you at the cheap slap-bang, or when you stood at the counter of the hot boiled-beef shop, and dined capitally for eightpence, including carrots and potatoes, elbowed all the time by clamorous customers with basins and plates, and devouring swiftly and in nervous dread lest some passing acquaintance should see you through the window? You wiped your mouth furtively before you left, and assumed a lounging air as you turned into the street, keeping your hand in your pocket, to look as if you'd been asking for change, and prepared with a jocular answer if any friendly busybody suddenly demanded what you were doing there! Salt beef is one of the things you are warned against now, even with the accompaniment of light and pleasing talk; though you could eat it with impunity when ragged boys and frowsy slatterns from adjacent garrets, grumbling to the man behind the counter at what they called short weight, furnished the only conversation you heard. Fried fish is bad, is it—I went on sardonically—and pickles unwholesome? Yet there used to be a shilling mid-day ordinary at a tavern in the Strand where the edge of your appetite was always dulled by skate and salt butter, and where you brought it round in time for the sodden joint by furtively administering to yourself walnuts and strong vinegar. Your highness is not to fast more than a certain number of hours! Yet when you had to choose between dinner and lunch, and were not able to afford both, you contrived to fast without serious inconvenience. Your appetite never out-stayed itself then. Your envious hunger at mid-day, when some of your wealthier fellow-students had cutlets or steaks sent in from a tavern near, and when the savoury steam brought tears of longing into your eyes; this hunger only increased by night, or if you gave way

and satisfied it by imitating the fortunate others, the pangs came on again at five or six o'clock, and you struggled with them through the evening, and then went famished to bed. Given a healthy appetite, limited means, a position necessitating clean linen and a whole coat, together with a thirst for pleasure, and a dread of debt, and what are the results upon the life of a youth who is launched upon the world of London without a friend? I know what they were with me: I starved.

The evening's amusement often made the morning's reflection take the shape of a resolve to skip dinner that day; and I have known a visit to the theatre and a modest supper afterwards make me dinnerless for a week. For pride was at stake, and it was sometimes necessary to eat, and, what was worse, to pay for food one could have done without, for the sake of instructive or amusing society; and in so doing sacrifice the genuine meal at a regular hour. Yet no one could be better or stronger than I was then; why, therefore, should I be condemned to this absurd punctiliousness, this fidgeting regularity now?

Thus I mused, savagely and unreasonably enough. "You want to do as I do? Would be quite satisfied if you might make such a meal as you saw me eat at the Ropers?" repeated my doctor, at my next visit, with an irritatingly healthy smile (I had suggested that aspiration, he being a tremendous diner); "my dear sir, I allow nothing to interfere with my exercise. Two hours every day on horseback, one hundred and twenty minutes good jolting on my cob, be my inclination, or my engagements, or the weather what they will, keeps me right." Horse-exercise, in brief, was the only thing for me.

Horse-exercise, quotha! How was I to do it? When was I to begin? To ride for health, to undergo a prescribed number of jogs and shakes in public for the sake of my private weal, to mount outside a prancing beast three or four days a week with a profound uncertainty as to the time and manner of my coming off again—the mere notion took my breath away! I determined to make cautious inquiries among men who rode. They were not all born to the purple, I said to myself, encouragingly. Some must have taken to equestrian display comparatively late in life; who knows but they were ordered it as I have been, and have suffered and surmounted the qualms which make me dizzy?

A flood of light followed, for I was taken in hand by friends who knew exactly what was good for me, who had been through the same thing themselves, and who generously permitted me to profit by their experience. They all had horses to sell or to recommend. Not common steeds, look you, but quadrupeds of peculiar action and special powers, created by Providence and trained by man for the one end of stimulating their rider's liver. They were high-bred, but not too high. They combined the symmetry of the racer with the blood and bone of the massive animals shown at country fairs adorned with plaited ribbons and led by a stout rope. A "bishop's cob" was the thing for my weight, "broad in the back, stout in the pins, but with plenty of 'go' in him across country," and he might be had (as a favour) for ninety pounds. Then there were useful roadsters, stout geldings, quiet hacks, strong mares, ponies, all full of promise, as well as venerable scarecrows which had done great service in their time, and for whom a kind master (and a hospital) were the chief things wanted. I was expected to buy them all, and seriously offended more than one friend by not jumping with avidity at what he proposed. I had changed my mind, I pleaded. I must have riding-lessons before I fixed upon a steed; I must convince myself that I had what they called "a seat" before I bought anything alive to sit upon.

Corporal Bump of the Knightsbridge barracks received me with open arms. Terms, one guinea for six lessons, horses found, and the time and attention of the corporal, or of one of his most trusted subordinates placed at the disposal of pupils. How long did a lesson last? Well, half an hour was about as long as a gentleman (slowly and critically) "who wasn't used to riding at all (depreciatory glances at my legs, figure, and girth, implying plainly that the common run of the corporal's pupils were so many Franconis, who only came to the barracks for a subtle finish to their style)—as long as such a gentleman could stand without bein' what you might call stiff." Were the horses quiet? As lambs. Should I be able to go out alone after six lessons? Well, that depended a good deal upon how I got on; but it was the corporal's conviction, from what he saw of me (a steady gaze all over and round my figure again, but with signs of approval this time, as if first impressions were rejected as hasty)—from what he saw

of me, "that a matter of twelve visits would make me caper up and down the Row with the best on 'em."

I am naturally gratified at this splendid vision, and begin the labour which is to realise it, there and then. We are in a barn-like structure opposite that portion of the Hyde Park drive to which Mr. Layard granted a supplementary road for riding this summer. I am taught to mount, a mild and worn-looking animal, grey, as if from extreme age, being brought into the centre of the barn for that purpose. "Left foot first, sir, please, and always see as your horse's head is to your left—it prevents confusion as to the side you get up on. Now then, left foot being in the stirrup, a heasy swaying of the body, first putting the bridle through the fingers of the left hand, and a grasping the hanimal's mane with the right, then a heasy swaying upwards, bringing the right leg quickly round as you come hup, and you fall naterally into your seat. Object of having your bridle fixed in left hand is that if horse moves you have him in check; object of right hand fast in his mane is that it gives you purchase and assists you in getting up. Now then, let's see you without sterrups—sterrups, mind you, ain't nateral things with orses, and every one should be able to do without them. Now, then" (in a voice of thunder to the horse), "Walk!" I am on my way round before I know it, and it reminds me of the camel-ride I once had for twopence when visiting the travelling menagerie from school. I hear "Trot!" on other days, and "Canter!" later, the stentorian tones in which both are said being obeyed with embarrassing quickness by the drilled steed; but though both are terrifying, the first walk round remains fixed on my memory. I hope meekly that my liver will be frightened, and give up its tormenting habits by the horror this walk inspires. I am on all sides of the horse at once, my knees come up, my head is on his head, my arms are round his neck, my body wriggles as if I were an uneasy-conscienced snake. The sawdust floor bobs up and down as if it were at sea, and the rough walls seem to close in as if we were in the terrible compressible prison-house and tomb described by Edgar Poe. But I persevere and have more lessons. "I must have them stomachs in!" was one gallant tutor's favourite mode of protesting against the attitude assumed on horseback by another stout pupil and myself; and the position of elbows (I always seemed trying to scratch

my head with the back of mine), the grip of knees, the pointing of toes—"drop a bullet from a rider's hear, and it ought to catch the hend of his boot, plumb!"—the holding of bridles, the [mounting and dismounting, the stopping of runaways, were all drummed into me by degrees. I took the deepest interest in the last accomplishment, for I foresaw being run away with whenever I was alone, and devoted two lessons to acquiring the art of "giving him his head at first, and then pulling the bit backards and forards like a saw;" and parted with my friend the corporal certificated as "only wanting a little practice to ride first-rate!"

My horse bought, and a livery-stable chosen, I became a Frankenstein in the possession of a monster. Nominally his owner, I was actually his slave. He was the destined avenger of my sins. He haunted me at unseasonable hours. He was brought to the door with relentless punctuality whenever my work made his presence an intrusion and a reproach; and he was tired or ill when I could have used him profitably. He was always taking balls, or developing strains, or requiring embrocations. His pasterns, his fetlocks, or what the groom called horribly his "whirlbones" and "coffin-joints," were out of order on an average three days a week.

The riding trousers, cut so tight to the leg, that I looked like a drab acrobat from the waist downward, and which, on the advice of another friend, I had been measured for at the famous Gammon's—an artist who constructs nothing else, and the walls of whose studio are adorned with sheaves of brown-paper trophies, showing the shape of a great variety of royal and noble legs, and each labelled "Tudor," or "Plantagenet," or "Montmorency," in black characters, and with the thick up-stroke Lord Palmerston desiderated for the Civil Service, and showing, mind you, how essential Gammon's cut in riding-trousers is to people of blue blood—these nether garments became tortures by reason of my own engagements and my horse's capricious health. Whenever I put them on, something happened, requiring me to appear anomalously in the haunts of men.

This painful state of things could not last. So far from my liver succumbing, it became worse, and my spirits went down to zero. At last I plucked up courage, and sold my fatal steed for a fourth of his

cost, and felt as much lightened as Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress when his burden left him. After this I hired. Horse-exercise was still said to be essential, and I hired. It cost me money, and it gave me pain. I suppose no man ever acquired such a curious experience of equine eccentricity in a short time. Brutes, which carried every one else "as if they were in their cradles," according to the job-master, always jibbed, or reared, or shied, or bolted, or kicked, when I was on their backs. I have been knelt down with in Oxford-street; I have ambled sideways up the Strand; I have been the unwilling terror of the Park; I was the scorn of cabmen, and the delight of roughs—and still I rode. I was the wild huntsman of the German story, only, instead of being chased by a spectre, I was hunted down by a liver. Now and again I had gleams of enjoyment, sweet but transient, when I was taken charge of by equestrian friends, who gave me a quiet mount, and took me with them; but the rule was solitary wretchedness and abject terror.

I was on the point of saying with the Northern farmer, "Gin oi mun doy, oi mun doy;" but this state of horror must not, shall not, last, for I'll give up the horse-torture at all risks—when the bicycle came to be talked of in England. Desperate men seek desperate remedies. I made inquiries as to the power of this fantastic machine: not as to how much could be got out of it—that every dealer and every expert were forward enough in telling me—but how much it would take out of me. Would it work my muscles, open my pores, stimulate my digestion, and defeat my liver? Might I, if I devoted myself to practice, hope at the end of a given term to substitute it for the dreadful horse?

There were not many velocipede schools open in London when these hopes and doubts possessed me. I made my way to one I had read of in Old-street, St. Luke's; feeling that I was adventurous, if not imprudent. For I had determined to try a mount, come what would. Anything is better than the hideous equine bondage I am groaning under, I soliloquised; and as what man has done man may do, why should not perseverance and assiduity enable me to take my exercise on two wheels, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the men in the Champs Elysées whom I saw last Easter? I purposely ignored my figure and my years, and asked

the director of the riding-school quite jauntily how soon he would undertake to turn me out proficient? He was a very different man to my other riding-master, Corporal Bump. A bicycle student himself, he explained the extreme simplicity of the accomplishment, and showed me how easily it could be acquired, in a way which carried conviction: for he pointed to himself and to the gentlemen at work all round us, in constant corroboration of what he said.

There were men who were having their first lesson, and who were being held on by stout attendants, who puffed and blew in the intervals of giving instructions; there were others who careered gallantly round the arena, darting in and out among the learners, like swallows skimming the surface of a pond; others, again, who, there's no denying, had many tumbles, and ran frequently against walls. Altogether, there were eleven pupils at their studies, and I speedily made a twelfth. I had arranged to have "the rough edge taken off me" by one of the attendants; after which the athletic proprietor would himself take me in hand, promising to turn me out fit to ride into the country on a bicycle in three weeks from that time. It seemed too good to be true, and as soon as I had my attendant out of earshot of his master, I asked him his opinion too, and if by extra care I could avoid the bangs and bumps there and then being undergone by the men who fell? That a month would do it at the outside, and that those gentlemen only tumbled about because they liked it, or were obstinate, he didn't know which it was, was my rudimentary teacher's cheering reply. "Thought themselves so clever that they would try to do without a man long before they were fit for it, and that's the cause of all the accidents I've heard of; but as for you, sir, if you only won't be in too much of a hurry, you'll learn it without a single fall."

His word was kept. I went for half an hour three days a week for three weeks, was supported round the school by the stout arm of my teacher, moved slowly round alone, learnt to use the brake, and to move swiftly, before I made my first attempt out of doors. There were a few aches and a little stiffness, some groundless fright as to internal injury after fatigue, but no tumbles and no misadventure of any kind. At my seventh lesson I was fortunate enough to enlist the attention of a disinterested friend, who made the rest of



my learning easy, who put finish to my style, and has been my companion on many a pleasant country ride since my obstinate liver yielded at discretion. It is only a few months since I sat upon a bicycle for the first time, and I already manage it with tolerable ease and quickness, and I enjoy it keenly. And now, for the sake of other middle-aged men who are troubled with a liver, I shall mention exactly what I can and cannot do. I don't, for obvious reasons, vault upon the machine, run it in races, or attempt giant feats. But my iron steed renders me the greatest service without these extravagances, and indeed does for me all that my doctor exacts. I can run a mile on a level country road in a few seconds under six minutes; I can travel twenty miles on a moderately hilly turnpike road—say the highway to Dorking—in about three hours; and I can always ensure myself a healthy glow or a free perspiration on the shortest notice and in the pleasantest way. My iron horse is never ill, is satisfied with a little oil occasionally in place of the multitudinous balls and washes, and does not eat. It is always ready for its work, and never obtrudes itself unnecessarily. If I let it alone for a few days or weeks, I am not haunted by fears of its being too fresh the next time I go out on it; and I am never worried into riding against my will out of consideration for its imaginary claims. It is docile, spirited, agile, and strong. In other hands than mine it can, I believe, be backed for money to beat any flesh-and-blood horse for a day's journey; and it has never failed yet to meet every demand I have been able to prefer to it.

"But," I hear some horse-loving reader remark, "surely you don't compare an inanimate compound of wood and iron with the intelligent friend of man, or the act of mechanically propelling yourself on the one with the glorious inspiration to be derived from the other? The joyous animal excitement in which man and beast share, until they seem to have but one being between them, where the faithful creature understands his rider's lightest word, and where the rider so sympathises with and loves the trusty friend below him as to spare his necessities and anticipate his wants—surely this is not to be gained from a bicycle, let you be ever so deft and strong?"

Not so fast, kind, courteous sir, or gentle madam. Is it quite certain that the feelings you describe so beautifully are en-

joyed by all who get upon horseback? May there not be a few who, like your servant, only ride upon compulsion, and in a state of misery which is very real? Are there not more valetudinarians than I? Besides, if you will have it, is there not a romantic side even to the iron horse? It is no magnified go-cart, remember, which will stand alone, or can be propelled without skill. It is worse than useless until animated by the guiding intelligence of which it becomes the servant and a part. Without its rider it consists merely of a couple of wheels and a crank or two, and looks like a section of broken cab as it lies helplessly on the ground. But it increases your sense of personal volition the instant you are on its back. It is not so much an instrument you use, as an auxiliary you employ. It becomes part of yourself, and though men of my bulk—let me be on the safe side, and say all men weighing more than fourteen stone—should have a spring of double strength, and should learn to mount and start off without vaulting and without assistance—an easy matter—none requiring exercise need fear that they are too old or too awkward for the bicycle. The four hundred miles ridden consecutively, the hundred miles against time, the jaunts from London to Brighton, the madcap flights down the cone of the Schneekoppe, the sitting in fantastic attitudes, the standing upright on the little saddle while the velocipede is at full speed, are feats which may be fairly left to gymnasts, professional or amateur. They are not for us, friends Rotundus, Greybeard, and Sedentarius. I don't know that we could acquire the power of performing them even if we were to try, and I am quite sure we shall not try, for our purpose is answered when our livers are taught their duty. The pleasures incidental to bicycle practice are so much clear gain, and the primary object, health, being secured, it is intensely gratifying to reflect how much one has learnt and enjoyed in the process. You know every village, every hamlet, every hill, every level highway, every pretty lane, around you for miles. You could re-edit Paterson's Roads. Moreover, you are the cause of wit in others.

"I wish to Blank he'd smash hisself, blank him!" was the pious and audible prayer of a gentleman of the brickmaking persuasion only yesterday, as I glided in-offensively past the Merton tavern, whose open doorway he adorned. "Very like an elephant on castors!" was, I learnt, the

description applied to me by a dear and intimate friend on my taking the trouble to display my dexterity before him and his volunteer company at drill. Again, I am to "Mind that 'ere pony does not run away with me!" while the statements that I have "given that hoss of mine too much corn;" that I shall "bust up like fireworks if I don't mind!" are flashes of humour, giving their utterers acute delight, and which I hear with great regularity every time I go out. He who can confer these simple pleasures on his fellow-man is a philanthropist; and it is astonishing how your benevolence increases as your digestion improves. You laugh at worries which once seemed crushing, and you become tolerant, patient, and amiable. You have safely and surely emancipated yourself from the penal regimen you dreaded, and can live like other people and prosecute your work with impunity. Let others speak of the utility of the bicycle as a means of locomotion, of the enormous distances to be traversed on it, of the vast speed to be attained by it. My recommendations are based on sanitary grounds alone, and I maintain it to be infinitely easier than a strict regimen, and incomparably more restorative than tonic, potion, or pill.

## DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS OF MODERN OPERA.

### CHAPTER I. IN THE MIRE.

"My dear sir," said Horace Walpole to Hogarth, when the latter began to hold forth about his system in painting, "you grow too wild;—I must take leave of you." Those who venture to speak of periods in music, may as well make up their minds, without self-compassion, or needless irritation, to be pilloried as pedants by the flippant and thoughtless. Yet if the past history and present state of the art (especially as regards the stage) come to be considered, unless we have some such references by way of landmarks, we shall only drift about and not arrive at any understanding of our pleasure, beyond that which is involved in idle and aimless sensation.

Let us see what three musical periods of the past century have comprised; in regard to such opera composers of France, Italy, and Germany, as have enjoyed a European reputation.

First period. Beethoven, Cherubini, Spontini, Weber, Simone Mayer, Zingarelli, Paer, Rossini, Boieldieu, M. Auber.

Second period. Marschner, Meyerbeer, M. Auber, Halévy, Hérold, Adolphe Adam, Rossini, Bellini, Mercadante, Donizetti.

Third period. Signor Verdi, M. Auber,

M. Thomas, M. Gounod, M. Felicien David, M. Offenbach, Herr Wagner.

It is only fair to add that the last half century has, in Germany, produced a goodly number of second-class composers, who might justifiably be matched against those of the second-rate writers of the last century. But in France there has been little or nothing analogous—save the appearance of M. Mermetet, the author and composer of the already forgotten Roland. The Hamlet of M. Thomas (the most ambitious work of late produced in Paris) lives by favour of the popularity of its Ophelia, Mademoiselle Nilsson, and by a carpenter's device in the last act. In Italy, the brothers Ricci seem to be already forgotten. So that, so long as M. Gounod continues silent, or, if speaking, shall prove unable to put forward another Faust or Mireille, the composers who may be said, for better for worse, to excite the greatest curiosity on the Continent at the time being, are M. Offenbach and Herr Wagner: the first, offering a signal example of success won by licentious frivolity; the second, overawing the ignorant, the thoughtless, the jaded, and the rebellious, by the arrogance and obscurity of his bombast. The phenomenon would be a sad one, had not the alternate ebb and flow of creation in music amounted to one of the most remarkable and special peculiarities of the art.

M. Offenbach made himself originally known in London as in Paris, some forty years ago, as a graceful but not vigorous violoncello-player, who wrote pleasant music, not merely for his instrument, but for the voice. Nothing much more meek, nothing much less marked than his playing and his music, is in the writer's recollection. His was the appearance of a slender talent—if there was ever such a thing—a talent which for many after seasons could make but a languid assertion of its existence in the concert-rooms and theatres of Europe. The composer's life was advancing; and such success as artists love appeared as far distant as ever, when some demon whispered in the musician's ear that there was a field yet to be trodden, because heretofore disdained by any artist of repute. There had been coarse comic singers without voices at the cafés, there had been comic actors of no less value than Verner and Odry, who could condescend to such coarse travesties as Madame Gibou and Madame Pochet; but for an artist of any pretension to turn their unmanly and unwomanly vulgarities to account by setting questionable stories to music which could be eked out by their unquestionable pranks, was left to the gently insipid writer under notice, who had been just, and only just, able to keep his name before the public. To-day the name commands Europe, and commands, too, such gains as in his prime the composer of *Il Barbiere*, *Il Turco*, *Corradino*, *La Cenerentola*, *Otello*, *Le Comte Ory*, *Moise*, *Guillaume Tell*, and many another serious and sentimental opera, never dreamed of. The iron age has come; the exchange of mirth

for the base excitement of prurient allusion and appeal.

It is not pleasant to have to insist that M. Offenbach has amassed a large fortune and an universal reputation by his late recourse to the bad device of double entendre in the stories selected by him, and in the execution of his favourite interpreters. His music, in itself trite and colourless, as compared (to rise no higher) with the comic music of Adam, though ingeniously put together, and neatly instrumented, would die out because of its nothingness, were not the action it accompanies spiced with indelicacy by women and men of the most meagre musical pretensions. His *Grande Duchesse*, *Mademoiselle Schneider*, salaried as *Sontag* never was in her best days, a pretty actress, content, some ten years ago, to display her less matured charms and more timid impertinences in that "dirty little temple of ungodliness" (as Mrs. Gore called it) the *Palais Royal Theatre*, would never have passed muster in opera had it not been for certain airs and graces which, till the opportunities afforded for their display in the prurient stories which M. Offenbach has set to colourless music, were confined to such singing and smoking houses as the *Paris Alcazar*; to the significant gestures of *Mademoiselle Theresa*, or her shabby imitators in the open-air shrines of the *Champs Elysées*. When the great Lady of *Gérolstein* leers at the brutal giant of a soldier whom she affects, and taps him temptingly on the arm with her riding-whip, who can resist such an exquisitely refined piquancy?

*Mademoiselle Schneider's* real value as a picaroon actress and singer cannot be better appraised than by comparing her with a predecessor made for something higher than questionable comedy and vaudeville—the lively, evergreen, *Mademoiselle Déjazet*. Though that lady's choice of occupation was anything but unimpeachable, the neatness, vivacity, and variety of her impersonations, and the skill with which she managed a defective and wiry voice, made her the completest artist of a certain disorderly order who has appeared on the stage in our experience. When her *Lisette* (*Béranger's Lisette*), her *Grande Mère*, her young *Richelieu*, and a score besides of distinct and perfectly finished creations, are remembered, it becomes difficult to endure without impatience triumphs so utterly worthless, so disproportionately repaid, as those of M. Offenbach's overrated heroine.

There is one comfort, however, to be drawn from the present state of affairs, discouraging as it appears to be. Lower in the setting of burlesque and in offence to delicacy, stage music can hardly sink. One step more, a step necessary to retain the attention of a jaded public which will no longer be contented with the present amount of indelicate excitement, and all honest, decorous, refined lovers of opera, will protest against further outrage; while it must prove increasingly hard to propitiate the Persons of Quality, who delight to

see the devices and delights of low places of entertainment figuring in the temple of the most graceful of the arts. The last and not the least "broad" of M. Offenbach's perpetrations, "*La Princesse de Trebizonde*," commissioned for *Baden-Baden*, and produced there the other evening, failed to satisfy either the lovers of respectable opera, or those who patronise covert, or overt impropriety. There is a point at which that which is diseased, ceases to produce the old effect, be the stimulus ever so largely heightened, and perishes of its own poison; neglected in its death even by the thoughtless people whose vacant sympathy had encouraged its wretched life.

#### CHAPTER II. IN THE MIST.

HYPERBOLE soars too high, or sinks too low,  
Exceeds the truth things wonderful to show,

says the old schoolboy's rhyme. We have made an attempt to sketch modern comic opera, as dragged in the mire, for the delectation of many refined and noble personages. We may now look at the condition of the musical drama when it is forced upwards into the mist, beyond any powers of common-sense or legitimate admiration to follow it or bear it company. The one extreme could, perhaps, not have been reached without its being counter-balanced by another one, of its kind, no less strange. Slang is, after all, only a familiarised and vulgar form of bombast.

Among the strangest appearances ever seen in the world of Music, are the existence of Herr Richard Wagner and his acceptance by a band of enthusiasts, many of whom are infinitely superior in gifts to himself. These bow down to worship him as a prophet, whose genius has opened a new and precious vein in a mine already wrought out. The wonder is as complete a one as any already enrolled in that sad but fascinating book—the *Annals of Charlatanry*.

How, subsequent to the partial success of his heavy but not altogether irrational *Rienzi*, Herr Wagner bethought himself of entering the domain of supernatural and transcendental eccentricity, has been shown in the successive production of his *Tannhäuser*, *Fliegende Holländer* (which contains an excellent spinning song and chorus), and his best opera, *Lohengrin*. The first and the third of these have gained what may be called a contested position in some of the opera houses of Germany; but in those of no other country. This is a noticeable fact; seeing that the taste for and understanding of music, becomes year by year less exclusive, and more and more cosmopolitan in England, France, and even Italy. The names of Mozart, Weber, and Beethoven, are now so many household words in every land where music is known. The silly folks who pretend that the limitation of Herr Wagner's success is the inevitable consequence of the nationality of the subjects treated by Herr Wagner, forget, that, in their stories, neither *Tannhäuser* nor *Lohengrin* have more local colour than Weber's *Der Freischütz*,

Euryanthe, Oberon, or Meyerbeer's Robert. But any paradox is easier to fanatical believers than to admit the fact, that if Herr Wagner's operas deserve the name of music, those by the masters referred to, do not; than to confess that the case is one not of principles in art carried out, but of the same utterly annulled: not of progress, but of destruction.

The progress of destruction has rarely, if ever, been more signally exemplified than in the history of *Das Rheingold*, the last work by Herr Wagner prepared at Munich, not produced in a hurry, or a fit of desperation, but deliberately as an experiment, to be followed by other similar freaks. For festival purposes, to delight a monarch willing to believe in and to uphold a favourite who has only thriven by favour of court notice, Herr Wagner has devised a trilogy of operas based on the *Nibelungen Lied*. To these *Das Rheingold* is a preface, and the four operas, or instalments, are intended to be performed on four successive evenings. It is not too much to assert that a year of preparation, were the entire resources of a court theatre placed at the disposal of the composer, would be entirely insufficient to insure the result of which Herr Wagner dreamed: even supposing the same to be worth insuring. Eight months or more have been habitually devoted at the Grand Opera of Paris to the production of Meyerbeer's operas, yet these are child's play compared with Herr Wagner's visions.

His choice of subject, it must be owned, was a singularly perilous one for even a German among Germans. It may be boldly asserted that a large portion of opera-goers have never read the *Nibelungen Lied*, and that the dim beliefs and superstitions of Eld, shadowed forth in that legend, with a rude yet poetic grandeur, appeal but distantly to the sympathies of the most open-minded. It may be doubted whether the frescoes of Schnorr and Cornelius, by which the poem was illustrated in the new palace at Munich, at the instance of the late King of Bavaria, have yet come home to the people as works of art should, though almost half a century has elapsed since they were painted; and though everything that the encouragement and instruction of comment could do, has been done, to make them understood, if not enjoyed. It is, further, hardly needful to point out that a picture on a wall, and a picture on the stage, run chances of acceptance entirely different, the one from the other. Audiences will not willingly frequent representations which are mystical, indistinct, and wanting in beauty. It is true that the absurdity of the stories of *Idomeneo* and *Die Zauberflöte* have not prevented those operas from holding the stage; but the magic was Mozart's, who lavished over every tale he touched melodies so exquisite in fascination and fancy, that the will and the power to find fault with the librettist, must surrender themselves to the charm of the musician. Nothing analogous is to be found in Herr Wagner's productions. The music is to be subservient

to the story and the scenery: the three combining to produce a whole. And this will be felt at every attempt which could be made to separate his music from the stage business and the scenery. Whereas Mozart's opera music has been the delight of every concert-goer, since the day when it was written—and this irrespective of the scenes to which it belongs, Herr Wagner's vocal phrases, detached from the pictures they illustrate, can only strike the ear as so much cacophonous jargon, in which every principle of nature and grace has been outraged, partly owing to poverty of invention, and absence of all feeling for the beautiful, partly owing to the arrogant tyranny of a false and forced theory.

Nor are the dramatic and scenic portions of *Das Rheingold*, if considered apart from the music, in any way successful. The giants and water nymphs, and "the human mortals," whose weal and woe they influence, are manoeuvred with a reckless clumsiness and disdain of contrast and stage effect which are wearisomely dreary, save in a few places where their sublime sayings and doings are perilously ridiculous. The stage is more than once peopled by mute persons without any intelligible purpose. The author-musician has not allowed himself, throughout a work which lasts a couple of hours, a single piece of concerted music; the trio of the swimming Rhine nymphs excepted. There is no chorus. The words at least correspond to the story in their inflated eccentricity. Euphuistic alliteration and neologisms have of necessity neither "state nor ancients," and could be only defended were the writer's object to raise stumbling-blocks or dig pitfalls in the way of the sayers and singers who have to unfold his wondrous tale. The result of the combination may be conceived by all who, not having "eaten nightshade," are still in possession of their sane senses. Even the most credulous of Herr Wagner's partisans become tepid, vague, apologetic, and scarcely intelligible, if they are called on to defend or explain Herr Wagner's text.

The above remarks and characteristics, not put forward without the best consideration in the power of their writer, are less tedious than would be the narration, scene by scene, of the dull absurdities of *Das Rheingold*. The scenery they accompany (for the success of the work is held by the congregation of the faithful to depend on its scenery) has necessary peculiarities no less remarkable. The "mystery" opens in a scene beneath the Rhine, where the nymphs who guard the treasure swim and sing; and, inasmuch as they must have resting places while they do their spiriting, are provided with huge substantial peaks of rock, while the stage, almost up to the "sky border," is filled with what is meant to represent the swiftly-flowing river. There is a final grand effect of a rainbow, not greatly larger than a canal bridge, which keeps close to the earth for the convenience of the dramatis personæ, who are intended to mount upwards on it to "the empyreal halls of celestial glory," as the



maker of a pantomime bill might phrase it. The absurdity of such an invention was lessened at the rehearsal by the recusancy of the actors and actresses to take the required responsibility. Add to these wonders mists that come and go on the open landscape without any apparent rhyme or reason, clouds, darkness, sunbursts, all so many hackneyed effects dear to our children and "groundlings" at Christmas time; and some idea may be formed of the shows to exhibit which the music has been bent and broken. The congregation declare that the utter want of success which attended the rehearsal was owing to the stupidity of the Munich machinists and painters. Yet these till now have borne a deservedly high character throughout Germany; and the stage of the Bavarian capital is one notoriously convenient for any purposes of change or effects of space. After all, Herr Wagner's devices and designs to carry off a dreary story and more dreary music, are neither stupendous nor new, howbeit difficult to realise.

In the early days of opera, a great sensation was made by crowds, and chariots, and horses, and descending and dissolving globes, from which came forth singing and dancing angels, in the *Costanza e Fortezza* of Fux. It was not later than the early part of the present century, that Spontini, in his "pride of place" at Berlin, laid himself open to the bitter sarcasms of German composers and critics, stung into a slanderous jealousy of the court-favour lavished on an Italian, by introducing on the stage in one opera, anvils, in another, elephants. Meyerbeer is to this day by some—and these even the defenders of Herr Wagner's proceedings—stigmatised as an empiric, because he connived at the resuscitation of the dead nuns in Robert; contrived the *ballet* of bathing ladies at Chenonceau, in *Les Huguenots*, and combined the three marches in *Le Camp de Silesie*. Herr Wagner has denounced such appeals to the eye, with the sharpness of an unscrupulous pen dipped in verjuice. Those who venture to possess memories, and bring them into the service of critical and historical comparison, must prepare to be abused for the blindness of their antiquated prejudices. That which used to be called a murder, is to-day too often described as a vagary of misdirected insanity or enthusiasm, arising from weariness of life and its burdens, and hatred of conventionalisms.

Last of all—in accordance with the natural order of precedence, it should have been first—a few words remain to be said of "the sound and fury," which signify little or nothing as music, though they fill its place in this strange piece of work. The absence of melody is, of course, in accordance with Herr Wagner's avowed contempt for everything that shall please the ear. This being the condition of matters, it is not wonderful that a common four-bar phrase of upward progression, re-

peated some thirty times or more in the prelude, should please, and (to be just) its effect at representing the ceaseless flow of water, is picturesque and happy. The river nymphs are next announced by a phrase borrowed from Mendelssohn's overture to *Melusine*. There is a pompous entry for the principal bass voice, there is an effect of nine-eight rhythm, borrowed from Meyerbeer's scene in the cloisters of Saint Rosalie (Robert); and these are all the phrases that can be retained by those who do not believe in what has been described by the transcendentalists, as "concealed melody." The recitative in which the scenes are conducted is throughout dry, unvocal, and uncouth. One Gluck might never have written to show how truth in declamation may be combined with beauty of form, variety of instrumental support, and advantageous presentment of the actors who have to tell the story. Then, Herr Wagner's orchestral portion of the work is monotonous and without variety. If his score be compared with those by Weber, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and M. Gounod (whose ghost scene, in *La Nonne Sanglante*, and procession of river-spirits in *Mireille*, come as freshly back to the ear as if they had been only heard yesterday) it will be found as ineffective as it is overlaid.

It may be said that such a judgment as the above is one too sweeping in its condemnation, after a single hearing, to be just. But with some persons first impressions of music, especially be that music theatrical, are last ones. Of course curiosities of detail are not to be apprehended and retained, under such circumstances; but if not the slightest desire to return, on the contrary a positive aversion, be engendered, in persons not unused to listen, not devoid of memory, the fault may not altogether lie in their arrogance or prejudice. The beauties of Beethoven's latest compositions—say his Ninth Symphony, and latest quartets—seize the ear in the first moment of acquaintance; though no time or familiarity may clear up the ugly and obscure crudities which, also, they unhappily contain. It will not avail to plead that it is ungenerous or unjust to judge from a rehearsal; when, as in the case of *Das Rheingold*, such rehearsal was tantamount in correctness and spirit to any first performance ever attended by European critic. Guests, and some at no small sacrifice, came to Munich from places as far distant as London, Paris, Florence, to ascertain what the newest production of the newest Apostle and Iconoclast of his day might prove. The majority of these would hardly have spent time, money, and fatigue, without expectation of pleasure; the more so, as it had been largely circulated that this Nibelungen Prologue was to mark a complete change in Herr Wagner's manner, being clear, simple, and melodious. The majority returned to the places whence they came, rather relieved than otherwise, by the fact that *Das Rheingold* was withdrawn indefinitely for further rehearsal (not alteration; such, indeed, being impossible), and that they

might go on their ways, homewards, spared another dismal evening, to be spent in wonder at the mouse brought forth by the mountain, at the pigmy production of the self-styled Musician of the Future.

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF JOHN ACKLAND.

### A TRUE STORY.

#### IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

ON inquiry at the police station in Charleston, S.C., Mr. Tom Ackland, accompanied by Mr. Cartwright, was shown the hat and book mentioned by the Charleston Messenger. Mr. Tom Ackland rather thought that he had once seen the book in the possession of his Cousin John. But of this he could not feel sure. The name, both in the book and in the hat, was printed. The handwriting on the margin of the page opposite the marked passage in the book proved to be quite illegible, but bore a strong resemblance to the sprawling and unsteady characters of the last two letters received by Mr. Tom Ackland from his cousin. Inside the hat they found the mark of a Georgetown maker, partly effaced. The police, after their first inquiries in Charleston, having jumped to the conclusion that they were being hoaxed, had treated the whole affair so carelessly that they had not even attempted to follow up this indication. Cartwright was the first to point it out. In consequence of this discovery, Mr. Tom Ackland immediately proceeded to Georgetown, and had no difficulty in finding there, the latter whose name and address Cartwright had detected inside the hat. On examining the hat, and referring to his books, the latter identified it as having been sold on the 29th of last September. To whom? He could not say. So many different hats were sold in the course of a day, to so many different people. He would ask his young men. One of his young men thought he had sold a hat of that description some time ago, but could not positively say it was on the 29th of September, to a gentleman who had one arm in a sling. Right arm? Could not remember, but thought it was the right arm. Hat was paid for in ready money. Was the gentleman on foot, or in a carriage? Thought he was on foot, but could not remember distinctly.

This was all the information Tom Ackland could obtain at Georgetown. He inquired at all the hotels there, but could not find the name of Ackland inscribed in

any of their books. On his return to Charleston, Cartwright told him that his own inquiries at the hotels and boarding-houses in that city had been equally infructuous.

On inquiring at the post-office, they were informed that letters had certainly been received there for John K. Ackland, Esq., and regularly delivered to a gentleman so calling himself, who applied for them daily. What sort of looking gentleman? Very invalid-looking gentleman, always muffled up to the chin in a long cloak, and seemed to suffer from cold even when the weather was oppressively hot.

"Was he at all like this gentleman?" asked Cartwright, pointing to Tom Ackland.

Really couldn't recal any resemblance.

Noticed anything else particular about him?

Yes. He carried one arm in a sling, and limped slightly.

Anything else?

Yes. Spoke with rather an odd accent.

Yankee accent?

Well, hardly. Couldn't well say what it was like. But the gentleman rarely spoke at all, and seemed rather deaf.

Had been for his letters lately?

Not since the 15th of October. There was one letter still lying there to his address. Explanations having been given by the two gentlemen, this letter was eventually, with the sanction of the police officer who accompanied them, handed over to Mr. Tom Ackland, that gentleman having claimed it on behalf of his cousin. It proved to be his own reply to John Ackland's last letter to himself.

Had the gentleman never communicated to the post-office his address in Charleston?

Never.

Tom groaned in the spirit. He could no longer entertain the least doubt that his worst fears had been but too well founded. The absolute and universal ignorance which appeared to prevail at Charleston of the existence of any such person as John Ackland would have been altogether inexplicable if John Ackland's own letters to Tom, alluding to the profound seclusion in which he had been living ever since his arrival in that city, did not partly explain it. No such person having ever been seen or heard of on 'Change, or at any of the banks in Charleston, how had John Ackland been living? Cartwright suggested that it was possible that he might have been living

all this while on the money which he himself had paid over to him in notes at Glenoak.

"That is true," thought Tom Ackland; for he remembered that his cousin, in his last letter from Glenoak, had stated that the notes were still in his possession. But nothing short of insanity could account for his not having deposited them, since then, at any bank. Unhappily such an hypothesis was by no means improbable. Who was that Spanish gentleman who professed to have discovered the hat and book of John Ackland's on the bank of the river? Could he have been John Ackland's assassin? But if so, why should he have spontaneously attracted attention to the disappearance of his victim, and promoted investigation into the circumstances of it? His story, as reported by the Charleston Messenger, was indeed so extravagant as to justify the opinion expressed by that journal. But Tom Ackland had in his possession letters from his cousin which made the story appear far less improbable to him than it might reasonably appear to any one not acquainted with the state of John Ackland's mind during the last month. It was very unlucky that there was now no possibility of seeing and speaking with that Spanish gentleman. For the gentleman in question, after having postponed his departure in order to aid the inquiries of the police, had left Charleston about two days before Tom Ackland's arrival there, on being assured by the authorities that his presence was not required. And he had left behind him no indication of his present whereabouts.

This was the position of affairs with Mr. Tom Ackland, and his inquiries appeared to have come to a hopeless dead lock, when, late one night, Mr. Cartwright (who had been absent during the whole of the day) burst into his room with the announcement that he had obtained important information about John Ackland.

It had occurred to him, he said, that John Ackland must, from all accounts, have been a confirmed invalid for the last few months. If so, he would probably have sought some country lodging in the neighbourhood of Charleston, where the situation was healthiest, without being inconveniently far from town, in case he should require medical assistance. Acting at once on this supposition (which, in order not to excite false hopes, in case it should lead to nothing, he had refrained from communicat-

ing to Tom), he had determined to visit all the environs of Charleston. He had that morning selected for his first voyage of discovery a locality only a few miles distant from Charleston, which he knew to be particularly healthy situation. His inquiries there were not successful, and he was on the point of returning to Charleston, when he fortunately recollected that he had not yet visited a little lodging-house where he remembered having once taken rooms himself, many years ago, when he was at Charleston with his poor wife, then in very weak health. He was not aware whether that house still existed, but he thought he would try; and he had been rewarded for his pains by learning from its landlady that some time ago a gentleman, who said his name was Ackland, called there, saw the house, and took it for six months. He paid the rent in advance, and had placed his effects in the house. But, to the best of the landlady's belief, he had not once slept at home since he became her tenant. He frequently came there, indeed, during the day, and had sometimes taken his meals there. But on all such occasions it was his habit to lock the door of his room as long as he was in it. Nothing would induce him to touch food in the presence of any one. She had served him his dinner often, but had never seen him eat it. Sometimes he carried part of it away with him; and once he told her that he did this in order to have the food analysed. He appeared to be under a constant impression that his food was poisoned; and the landlady was of opinion that her lodger was a decided monomaniac, but that he was perfectly harmless. She said he was a very eccentric gentleman, but an excellent tenant. He had been at the house on the morning of the 16th (she remembered the date because of a washing bill which he told her to pay for him on that day, and for which she has not yet been reimbursed). He remained at home during the whole of the day, but locked up his room as usual. About six o'clock in the evening he went out, locking the doors of all the sitting-rooms and bedrooms, and taking the key with him. Before leaving the house, he told her that he was likely to be absent for some time, as he was pursued by enemies, and that there would probably be inquiries about him, but she was not to notice them, and on no account to mention his name to any one. "She has never seen him since. But her description of him precisely tallies with

that which was given us at the post-office. She is a very old woman, rather blind, rather deaf, and very stupid. I don't think she can either read or write. Most of this information I obtained from the nigger gal who does all the work of the house. She eventually promised to have the locks opened in our presence to-morrow; and I have settled that, if agreeable to you, we will drive over there after breakfast." Thus Cartwright to Tom Ackland.

Poor Tom Ackland was profoundly affected by this fresh evidence of zeal and sympathy on the part of Mr. Cartwright. But Cartwright himself made light of his own efforts. "Pooh, pooh, my dear sir!" he said, in reply to Tom's repeated expressions of gratitude; "if he was your cousin, was he not also my friend?"

When Tom Ackland entered the first room, from which the lock was removed, in the house to which Cartwright conducted him on the following day, one glance round it told him all, and, with a low moan of pain, he fell upon the bed and sobbed. There, on that bed, was the dressing-gown which poor John Ackland had worn the last evening on which he and Tom had sat together discussing John's plans for the future. There, in the wardrobe, were John Ackland's clothes; there, on the shelf, were John Ackland's books; there, on the table, were John Ackland's papers. And among those papers Tom afterwards found an unfinished letter addressed to himself. It was written in those sprawling shaky characters which Tom had lately been learning, sadly, to decipher, and which were so all unlike the once firm and well-formed handwriting of his cousin. "God bless you, dear Tom!" (the letter said). "My last thought is of you. I have borne it long. I cannot bear it longer. Nobody will miss me but you. And you, if you could see me as I am now, if you could know all that I have been suffering, even you, would surely wish for me that relief from misery which only death can give. They are after me day and night, Tom. They have left me no peace. Mary Mordeant is at the bottom of it all. She hides

herself. But I know it. I have no heart to post this letter, Tom. I have no strength to finish it. Good-bye, Tom. Don't fret. Dear, dear Tom, good-bye."

Tom Ackland returned to Boston with two convictions. One, that his unfortunate cousin had perished by suicide on the night of the 16th of October; the other, that Philip Cartwright was a most unselfish, warm-hearted fellow. The whole story of John Ackland's mysterious disappearance and lamentable death had excited too much curiosity, and been too hotly discussed, both at Richmond and Boston, to be soon forgotten in either of those localities. Serious quarrels had arisen (in Richmond at least), and old acquaintances had become estranged in consequence of the vehemence with which diverse theories were maintained by their respective partisans on the subject of John Ackland's fate. But time went on, and, as time went on, the story became an old story which no one cared to refer to, for fear of being voted a bore. There were not wanting at Richmond, however, some few persons by whose suspicious fancies Philip Cartwright, against all evidence to the contrary, remained uncharitably connected with the mysterious disappearance and subsequent suicide of the Boston merchant, in a manner much less flattering to that gentleman's character than Mr. Tom Ackland's grateful recollection of his friendly exertions at Charleston.

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